

FINGER LAKES SPORTS

TIMES

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Brain trauma bill to become NY law

Nozzolio worked with Ciancaglini to make sure student-athletes don't return to action before they're ready

Times Sports Staff

ALBANY — The New York state legislature has adopted legislation co-sponsored by state Sen. Mike Nozzolio, R-54 of Fayette, that will help coaches, teachers and other school personnel identify traumatic injuries to the brain and prevent student-athletes from compounding those injuries.

The legislation, known as the Concussion Management Awareness Act, was born from discussions between Nozzolio and Varick resident Ray Ciancaglini. Ciancaglini suffers from pugilistic dementia, leaving him alternately confused, forgetful and trembling with Parkinson's Syndrome-like shudders. Ciancaglini's condition was caused by multiple concussions suffered during his boxing career.



Ciancaglini

The Concussion Management Awareness Act requires coaches, teachers and other school personnel to be trained about the symptoms of mild traumatic brain injuries and the importance of proper medical treatment. In addition, the State Education Department, the Department of Health and local school districts will post information for parents and students about how brain injuries occur, the signs and symptoms of such injuries and guidelines about returning to school, physical-education classes and sports after an injury.

The legislation also prohibits any student who may have suffered a concussion from participating in athletic activities until they have gone 24 hours without showing symptoms and have been authorized to return by a licensed physician.

The state Senate approved the bill Monday, one day before it was passed in the state Assembly. It will become law when it's signed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

"School athletic programs, intramural sports and physical-education classes are an important part of the educational experience at every school district in our state," Nozzolio said in a press release. "It is important that we make this experience as safe as possible for our student-athletes and ensure that every school is prepared to treat and monitor concussions and other brain injuries."

"This legislation is critical in reducing the risk of

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these injuries causing long-term damage and will encourage parents, students and coaches to take preventative steps to avoid serious head injury."

Ciancaglini founded a website, www.thesecondimpact.com, to address Second Impact Syndrome. With the assistance of Dr. Jason Feinberg, Ciancaglini is visiting local schools and talking with athletes. Not only is he addressing the severity of his own concussions, Ciancaglini is stressing the importance of treating the initial head injury and making sure it is fully healed before going back to

the playing field.

"I thank Ray for his support and encouragement," Nozzolio said. "This legislation will ensure that coaches, trainers and others are properly prepared to handle mild traumatic brain injuries before they become severe or life-threatening."